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Camp Manistique to Close, Public Work Crews Cancelled

As we have discussed throughout the course of this year, the state is faced with one of the biggest budget challenges in history. Although we provide a critical service and do so in an exemplary way, the MDOC uses the largest share of the state's general fund. Unfortunately, our inability to close the Southern Michigan Correctional Facility (JMF) on schedule has resulted in an even larger budget deficit for the department that needs to be addressed immediately. Today we are making two more announcements in what has been a series of budget savings and cost cutting measures this year.

The first announcement is that we will close Camp Manistique by early September of this year. Camp Manistique costs \$4.5 million to run each year and has 45 staff members. We anticipate that most of the staff will be absorbed into the large number of custody vacancies we have in correctional facilities in the Upper Peninsula where the camp is located. This will help reduce overtime and result in significant additional savings. The 264 minimum security prisoners at the camp can be moved to available beds within the system. The \$4.5 million in annual operation costs savings plus overtime reduction expenses at other facilities equals over \$5 million per year in savings.

The second announcement is that we will cancel the majority of our public work contracts. The Department operates about 250 public works crews across the state. We plan to eliminate about 208 of them, keeping those that perform work for other state agencies (such as the departments of transportation and natural resources, and the Michigan State Police) as well as those operating at Special Alternative Incarceration (SAI).

We understand and appreciate the valuable service that work crews perform in communities statewide, but their cost (and the expected savings) is substantial. Last year it cost approximately \$10 million to support public works crews, compared to the \$1.1 million in fees we collected for the service. This resulted in a net loss of \$8.9 million for the department. Eliminating the majority of the crews will yield a significant cost savings. While public works contracts will be cancelled for the foreseeable future, the Department remains open and optimistic that, with improved economic times, they could be reinstated at a later date.

While the challenges we face are many, our drive to do the right thing and continue to be the best possible stewards of the taxpayers' resources remains strong. I am proud of our employees and appreciate your commitment to making the Department the best it can be. Thank you for your continued support and your resiliency in these transitional times.

Patricia L. Caruso

Director, Michigan Department of Corrections